

Seaman, Katherine

From: sjokeeffe@gmail.com on behalf of Stephanie O'Keefe [stephanie@okeeffe.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2009 6:49 PM
To: Seaman, Katherine; Arcamo, Judith
Subject: for business checklist agenda item

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Select Board <SelectBoard@amherstma.gov>
Date: Fri, Aug 14, 2009 at 6:41 PM
Subject: FW: Thoughts
To: "Weiss, Gerald" <WeissG@amherstma.gov>, "Brewer, Alisa" <avbrewer@comcast.net>, stephanie@okeeffe.com, dstein@mtholyoke.edu, "Shaffer, Larry" <ShafferL@amherstma.gov>, "Hayden, Aaron" <aahayden@amherst.edu>

From: Tina Swift[SMTP:TSWIFTY7@HOTMAIL.COM]
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2009 6:42:28 PM
To: Select Board
Subject: Thoughts
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I write to you as an ordinary citizen (not wearing any other hats this time). While watching the replay of your August 10th Select Board meeting, I had a thought. When speaking of the "Amherst Is Unfriendly to New Business" issue, Ms. O'Keefe touched on the problem: What is the process when a business expresses an interest in coming to Amherst, or expanding?

My thoughts are this: We should examine this issue as if we were a Mystery Shopper. Put ourselves in the shoes of the business owner. For instance, if I want to rent the former Ben and Jerry's and set up an ice cream shop *with a grill*, what do I do? Well, of course, first I rent the space. As a business owner, I know I need some permits from the health department. Do I contact the Fire Dept. to make sure the hood/vent is o.k. for the grill? Or will the Town automatically contact me? I'm guessing I need a permit ... do I call Inspection Services? What about my sign? Can it be on the sidewalk and neon on the building?

I believe the people working in the individual departments are doing an excellent job of issuing permits -- but if the business owner doesn't know enough to contact all of the departments, then there is a problem and delays.

I have been told by one successful business owner that even after contacting one department regarding a renovation, another countermanded what they had been told. They had to re-do plumbing at much expense. This does not make for good feelings.

So I'm thinking a "You Want Your Business to Be in Amherst" guide would be a good thing. It would be comprehensive in steering the prospective Amherst business owner to the right departments (complete with phone numbers and emails). Since I wrote the original "Find It" guide, which the League of Women Voters now oversees, you can see that I love those types of guides!

And that's my two cents! (By the way, I again applaud your hard work on the Select Board.)

Best wishes, *Tina Swift*

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